

NOVEMBER 29, 2020

You are at the eye doctor and it's time for the peripheral vision test. You know the one. It's where you put your head up to a contraption and have to click a switch every time you see a squiggly line. If you don't concentrate and maintain optimal focus, you will miss them and skew the outcome of the test. You can easily find yourself with a diagnosis that really isn't accurate! Concentration and focus are key to succeeding with this evaluation. They are also key to developing a healthy, vibrant spiritual life. If we do not bring our full consciousness to the task, concentrate with all our might, be watchful and vigilant, we are not going to see God's loving presence flashing before our eyes!

That's why we need Advent. Let's face it. We can easily get distracted, focus on nonessential and superficial things and lose touch with what really matters. Our attentions wander. We daydream and even become a bit overwhelmed and tired. All of the stresses and demands of life consume us and we find ourselves constantly trying to play catch up rather than relishing the moment of the now. "Now" moments are so fleeting. They flash before us like those squiggly lines on a screen. Present moments go as quickly as they come but it is important to discover them and rest in them as often as we can. Though gone in a flash, these now moments of encounter with God teach powerful lessons and offer a grounding in truth that can be found nowhere else. It's the grace of Advent to become watchful and attentive because we are never sure when God will surprise us.

God loves surprises and love thrives on them! God's now moments of surprises come as tender instants of intimate connection where I find profound peace, experience joy, and rest in love. These are Advent times reflective of the now moments when Christ first was born, when God surprises us during every time we care to watch and when the great surprise of Christ's second coming dawns upon us all. But, to discover the grandeur and experience the awe of these now times, we have to be ready. We have to want to be there. We have to believe. And, we have to have the desire to soak in as much as we can in the time we have before us.

Today's gospel tells us to "Be watchful." This comes natural to families. Parents are watchful of their children's health, grades and friends. Children are watchful of parental moods. Today's gospel encourages us to use this ability to see God acting in the innocence, tenderness, love and forgiveness of your family. "Be watchful," the Lord is already with you.

Facebook

Our parish has created an official Facebook page and the address is <https://www.facebook.com/cathedralofaltoona> The link is found at the top of our parish's webpage. Our official page will gradually become a convenient way to keep people informed and post notices. (Please do not use the link at the bottom on the page.)

Prayers For Vocation

Oh God, we earnestly beseech Thee to bless this diocese with many priests, brothers and sisters, who will gladly spend their entire lives to serve Thy Church and to make Thee known and loved. Bless our families. Bless our children. Choose from our homes that are needed for Thy work. Mary, Queen of the Clergy! Pray for us. Pray for our priests and religious. Obtain for us many more.

In the Unexpected

"What could happen next?" How many times have you asked yourself that question in the past year? Though we most often use that expression when things don't seem to be going our way, this year it has been an expression of the constant changes to our world which the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought. But we might use the same expression to explain our feelings of being overwhelmed by blessings and good things, when the stars seem to align just right.

No matter what, we can say with certainty that tomorrow will not go exactly as we envisioned. Our lives are influenced by so many factors and the world around us is increasingly complex. Rather than be surprised by the unexpected, maybe we should expect the unexpected.

Living in this manner causes us to cherish more deeply the gifts we have been given. It helps us to live in the present and become mindful of those around us. Our relationships deepen. Our sense of responsibility builds. Our stewardship way of life finds new meaning and purpose.

This Advent will not be the same experience as last Advent. It remains to be seen what the coming days and weeks have in store for each of us. However, no matter what happens, Jesus Christ is there to welcome us to the unexpected. He will celebrate with us in joy and he will even feel our pain. You can count on the unexpected, but you can also count on Him to be there with you. He is now and forever, Emmanuel, "God with us." He is the expected in all things unexpected.

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THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN

THE CATHEDRAL

OF THE

BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA 16601-3315
CHURCH OFFICE: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.
Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANointing OF THE SICK:

Upon Request and Communal celebration

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Charismatic Prayer - Normally 3rd Monday of the Month
Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.
Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM
Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.
Sunday Evening 6:15 PM - 8:15 PM
Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

<https://www.facebook.com/cathedralofaltoona>

Sunday:	5:00 PM (Vigil)	Holyday:	5:30 PM (Vigil)	Weekday:	6:45 AM
	8:00 AM		8:00 AM		12:00 Noon
	10:00 AM		12:00 Noon	Saturday:	8:00 AM
	12:00 Noon		5:30 PM		12:00 Noon
	5:00 PM				

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Stanley Carson, Administrator

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND, SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011

Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112

Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

November 29, 2020

Readings: *Is 63:16-17,19; 64:2-7; 1 Cor 1:3-9; MK 13:33-37*

MASS INTENTIONS

November 30, Monday: Saint Andrew, Apostle

Readings: *Rom 10:9-18; Mt 4:18-22*

6:45AM + John Capouellez, Anniversary (Family)

12:00PM + Debbie Capotosti, Bir.(Yanchik Family)

December 1, Tuesday: Advent Weekday

Readings: *Is 11:1-10; Lk 10: 21-24*

6:45 AM + Msgr. Roy Kline (Gerrie Rose)

12:00 PM + Dave Berger (Serge Szuhaj Family)

December 2, Wednesday: Advent Weekday

Readings: *Is 25:6-10; Mt 15; 29-37*

6:45 AM + Souls in Purgatory (Anonymous)

12:00PM + Joseph A Knott (Alan & Mary Dodson)

December 3, Thursday: Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

Readings: *Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21, 24-27*

6:45 AM + Fred Fedeli (Family)

12:00PM + Madeline Vogel (M/M Stephen Kinder)

December 4, Friday: St. John Damascene, Pr. & Dr.

Readings: *Is 29:17-24; Mt 9:27-31*

6:45 AM + Dottie Stephens (Cowan Family)

12:00PM + Lori Keirn (Suzie Behe)

December 5, Saturday: Advent Weekday

Readings: *Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Mt 9:35-10:1, 6-8*

8:00AM + Vickie Dempsie, Health(Dave Capouellez)

12:00PM + Herbert Kuttruff, Anniversary (Family)

Vigil: SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Readings: *Is 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Pt 3 :8-14; MK 1:1-8*

5:00PM + Marti Stefanon(Jim & Steph Kilcoyne)

December 6, Sunday:

8:00AM + RichardAnthony (Tom and Debbie Swires)

10:00AM + John Adams (Mary & Albert Yurinko)

12:00PM + Beverly Woodring (Mike & Sherry Byrne)

5:00 PM Pro Popolo/ For the People

Please remember our sick in your prayers.

Radio Mass

Our parish's live radio Mass will be on Sunday, at 10:00 A.M. on WFBG 1290AM. We are pleased to be able to provide this service and we are grateful to our sponsors.

Workbooks for Readers and Lectors

The new 2021 workbooks are now available after all the masses and also at the Parish Office during regular hours. Monday-Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOK

The Little Blue Book for the Advent and Christmas Season will be available at the entrances next weekend. The meditation booklets contain 6 minutes worth of reflections and prayers based upon Scripture and the feasts, customs, and symbols of Advent and Christmas. The handy pocket-sized booklet can be conveniently used in church, at home, or while waiting in an office.

Gospel Activity Sheets For Children

We now have "Growing with the Gospel" activity pamphlets for the children in grades Kindergarten to first grade, and also second to third grade. They are located on the table in the cross aisle. They are available for the children to take, it reflects on the Gospel of each Sunday.

Religious Ed PK-8

We will be collecting new hats, scarves, mittens, toys, and personal care items during Advent to be distributed to the Blair County Family Services Abuse Shelter. Collection will end on January 1st. Items may be taken to the Parish Main Office Mon-Fri 9-4:30 or to the former church baptistry before and after all Masses. Contact Chris Laraia at 814-312-7317 or claraia@dioceseaj.org if you have any questions. Thank you for your help with our program's Advent project.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

You are invited to spend some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament from after the noon Mass on Wednesday, December 2nd until after the 7:00 P.M. confessions. There is a sign-up sheet on the table at the center of the cathedral.

Polish Christmas Customs

Mother Agneska Kijowska, SSCJ, a native of Krakow, Poland and former Superior General of the Sacred Heart Sisters, will offer a Polish Christmas customs on Sunday December 6th from 2:00 PM until 4:00 PM at St. Anne's Church hall in Davidsville. To register please contact the parish office at either St. Anne (479-2664) or Queen of Angels (754-5224) by December 4th. The class is free and is opened to anyone who has an interest in Polish customs. Social distancing is required.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION Sunday, November 22, 2020 \$



Calendar of Prizes 2021 Are Here!

Calendar of prizes 2021 are being sold at the Cathedral Square Door after all masses starting this weekend. Each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$20.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,500.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$1,000.00. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office at 814-944-4603 weekdays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM to check for availability or stop by the Cathedral door after Mass on the weekends. These make great Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers.

Shop, Soup & Sip with St. Nick

On Saturday and Sunday December 5 & 6, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church Basement & School Cafeteria, 806-11th Street Altoona Pa 16602. Holy Trinity Catholic School is organizing their first annual "Shop, Soup, and Sip with St. Nick" with a one-of-a-kind visit with St. Nicholas himself, accompanied by delicious foods and fun. Guests will have opportunities to enjoy exquisite tastes of the season, balloon animals, and premier vendor shopping perfect for the holiday!

Pre-Purchase-\$2 child, \$3 Adult. Due to occupancy limitations, ticket times are staggered. We kindly ask that you and your guests adhere to your ticket time. Saturday times are 4:30-6:30pm and 6:30-8:30pm. Sunday times are 11:30-1:30pm and 1:30-3:30pm and 6:30-8:30pm. Please contact HTCS at 942-7835 for tickets or visit our website at- holytrinitycatholic.school.

Parish Council

The Parish Council Communication Committee would like to improve communications with parishioners and establish a better avenue to keep you informed of parish events. We would like to gather email addresses at this time. Please complete the form online at <https://forms.gle/hTCZaboAG4ZJb7nE6> or their are forms available in the church office during office hours. Completed forms can be returned through the Sunday offering or sent to the Parish Office.

WELCOME TO ADVENT

We often think we know so much; but, this Sunday's Gospel reading reminds us that we will never know the time when Jesus will come again in glory. He simply tells us: "Be watchful! Be alert." One of the ways to prepare for His coming is by experiencing the Sacrament of Reconciliation. During Advent this year, since we are not able to have a Communal Celebration of the Sacrament, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available on Sundays at 4:00 P.M., Wednesdays at 7:00 PM and on Saturdays at 12:30 PM. The Sacrament will also be celebrated following the daily Masses the week of December 14.



CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

This year, we will have Masses on Christmas Eve at 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Our Masses on Christmas Day will be at Midnight, 8:00 AM and Noon.

Nocturnal Adoration

Will take place at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 2716-Broad Avenue on Friday December 4th, 2020, from 8:00 PM to 11:00PM.

Stewardship Reflections

As the Church begins a new liturgical year, we are reminded in today's Gospel that we are nothing more than servants, stewards of the Master's possessions, but who do not know when our Master will return. We have been given the responsibility of sharing our gift in order to build up the Master's kingdom. Good stewards know they are accountable and use their gifts to do God's will.

"The good steward practices, once again, that stewardship truism, 'Do what you can. Not what you can't.' Different situations in the lives of our families, our parishes, our communities will call forth different applications of those three trusty pillars of good stewardship: time, talent, and treasure," (Seven Secrets of Successful Stewards, Paul Wilke, 2005 Catholic Update, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, Ohio)

Stay awake for opportunities to share your time, talent and treasure! May we be awake and alive in our faith when He comes again in glory!